

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 3449

NODIS

FOR UNDERSECRETARY HABIB AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY
ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG US

SUBJ: EGYPTIAN REACTION TO SECRETARY'S VISIT

1. A WEEK HAS NOW GONE BY SINCE THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO EGYPT AND WE HAVE HAD VARIOUS OPPORTUNITIES TO SOUND OUT EGYPTIAN REACTIONS TO THAT VISIT. EGYPTIAN PRESS REACTION HAS ALREADY BEEN REPORTED THROUGH VARIOUS USIS/CAIRO TELEGRAMS.

2. AMONG SENIOR LEVEL EGYPTIANS, E.G. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, CABINET MEMBERS, UNDERSECRETARIES, NEWSPAPER EDITORS, ETC., THERE IS GENERAL SATISFACTION ABOUT THE VISIT. HAVE HEARD NUMEROUS FAVORABLE COMMENTS ABOUT THE SECRETARY'S "STYLE". APART FROM THE FREQUENT BARBS OF CHRONICALLY ANTI-AMERICAN EDITOR OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE EGYPTIAN GAZETTE (WHICH FEW EGYPTIANS READ), IMPRESSION WAS CLEARLY GAINED THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, AS EVIDENCED BY THE SECRETARY'S ACTIVITIES HERE, IS GENUINELY SEARCHING FOR A WAY TO BREAK THE IMPASSE AND WANTS TO CONDUCT AN EVEN-HANDED POLICY. FACT THAT THE SECRETARY WAS ABLE
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TO ANNOUNCE CANCELLATION OF CLUSTER BOMB SALE TO ISRAEL HELPED FOSTER THIS POSITIVE IMPRESSION. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SATISFACTION, TOO, THAT SADAT SHOULD BE THE FIRST ARAB LEADER TO BE INVITED TO THE US BY NEW ADMINISTRATION. KNOWLEDGEABLE EGYPTIANS VIEW THIS GESTURE AS CONTINUED RECOGNITION OF SADAT'S ROLE IN THE ME PROBLEM AND BELIEVE THE VISIT WILL STRENGTHEN

HIS POSITION AT HOME.

3. SAME TIME THERE HAS NOT BEEN TOO MUCH PUBLIC COMMENT-ARS ABOUT THE SECRETARY'S VISIT AND ONE USUALLY HAS TO ASK ABOUT IT TO GET RESPONSES. I ASCRIBE THIS TO (A) THE BRIEFNESS OF THE VISIT, AND (B) THE FACT THAT IT WAS SANDWICHED BETWEEN THE FRG AND FRENCH FONMINS' VISITS, AND WAS THEREFORE ONLY PART OF THE PREVAILING SPATE OF DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY IN WHICH CAIRO WAS INVOLVED. THE CONSTANT COMINGS AND GOINGS OF FONMINS IS PRETTY HEADY STUFF FOR THE EGYPTIANS, WHO LIKE TO BASK IN THE AURA OF IMPORTANCE SUCH VISITS SEEM TO GIVE TO THEM.

4. ALTHOUGH I HAVE NOT SEEN SADAT SINCE THE VISIT, I HAVE HEARD FROM SEVERAL SOURCES THAT HE IS VERY PLEASED. HE LIKED THE SECRETARY AND BELIEVES HE HAS DEVELOPED RAPPORT. HE IS LOOKING FORWARD TO HIS VISIT TO THE US, BUT WE SHOULD EXPECT THAT HE WILL RAISE IN WASHINGTON THE SUBJECT OF SOME US ARMS ASSISTANCE. THIS MEANS A GREAT DEAL TO HIM IN TERMS OF KEEPING THE MILITARY LOYAL AND SUCCESS OF VISIT WILL BE VIEWED PARTLY IN TERMS OF RESPONSE HE GETS TO HIS REQUEST. I KEEP HEARING THAT HE STILL HAS F-5E'S VERY MUCH IN MIND.

5. FAHMY IS LIKEWISE GENERALLY PLEASED, ALTHOUGH CHARACTERISTICALLY HE STILL GRUMBLES THAT THE VISIT WAS TOO SHORT TO ALLOW AN ADEQUATE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. HE IS ALSO STILL UNHAPPY THAT

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GENEVA CANNOT BE RECONVENED UNTIL FALL. FINALLY, FAHMY IS PRIVATELY CRITICAL OF WHAT HE REGARDS AS A POOR SADAT PRESENTATION TO THE SECRETARY. SPECIFFICALLY, FAHMY BELIEVES THE PRESIDENT DID NOT FIGHT THE CASE FOR PLO PARTICIPATION STRONGLY ENOUGH AND IDENTIFIED HIS FALLBACK POSITIONS TOO SOON. MOREOVER, FAHMY IS WORRIED THAT SADAT MADE THE IDEA OF SIGNING A PEACE AGREEMENT INVOLVING NON-BELLIGERENCY SOUND TOO EASY. AS HE HAS BEEN IN THE PAST, FAHMY IS CONCERNED THAT THE PRESIDENT SOMETIMES OVER-ESTIMATES HIS CAPABILITY TO DO CERTAIN THINGS. FAHMY EXPECTS TO ACCOMPANY THE PRESIDENT TO THE US.

6. I SAW PRIMIN MAMDUH SALIM AND DEPMIN/MINWAR GENERAL GAMASY TWO EVENINGS AGO AT KUWAITI NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION. BOTH EXPRESSED PLEASURE ABOUT BRIEF OPPORTUNITY THEY HAD TO MEET THE SECRETARY. GAMASY ALLUDED TO THE EGYPTIAN ARMS REQUEST AND NOTED THE IMPORTANCE THE PRESIDENT ATTACHES TO THE

SUBJECT. SAME TIME GAMASY VOICED HIS OWN SKEPTICISM
THAT USG WILL RESPOND POSITIVELY TO REQUEST. GAMASY
EXPRESSED SATISFACTION, HOWEVER, THAT ME PEACE PROCESS
SEEMS ONCE AGAIN TO BE GETTING UNDERWAY AFTER BEING
STALLED FOR YEAR AND A HALF. HE HOPED USG WILL DO
UTMOST TO PUSH IT FORWARD WITH DESPATCH.
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